



Shaikh al-Islam Ibn
Taymiyyah (728H) Demolish-
ing the Bid'ah of Mawlid –
What did he really say!!!

Compiled, Translated & Annotated
Abu Hibbaan & Abu Khuzaimah Ansaariⁱ

The people of innovation and the ardent proponents of Mawlid al-Nabi often mention in support of their view a statement of Shaikh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah which they firstly take out of context and secondly misquote by only citing the beginning of the statement. It is very strange and odd that these people quote and present the statement of Shaikh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah for the mawlid when they spend night and day declaring him to a heretic and an anthropomorphist. If they say they have only quoted Shaikh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah as an evidence against the Salafi's and the Ahl al-Hadith, then this yet again is another serious contradiction and shows the people of innovation do not have sound intelligence.

On one hand they call us la-madhahabiyyah or ghair muqallids and then at the same time they quote our scholars to us as evidence. Without digressing from the issue at hand, why would the statement of a scholar be a hujjah for the very same people you call ghair muqallids. This is nonsensical and a clear proof the people of shirk and bid'ah have the most incongruous of intellects.

The Sufis have done the rounds with a statement of Imam Ibn Taymiyyah with a failed attempt to support the

Mawlid. Mr Sufi himself; Hisham Kabbani pushed this statement around and his cohorts solidified it amongst their fellow sufi brethren. They refer to the statement of Imam Ibn Taymiyyah where he said,

“This is Imam Ibn Taymiyya’s opinion about Mawlid from: “the Collected Fatwas,” (“Majma’ Fatawa Ibn Taymiyya,”) Vol. 23, p. 163:

“fa-t’adheem al-Mawlid wat-tikhaadhuhu mawsiman qad yaf’alahu ba’ad an-naasi wa yakunu lahu feehi ajra `adheem lihusni qasdihi t’adheemihi li-Rasulillahi, salla-Allahu `alayhi wa sallam”

“To celebrate and to honor the birth of the Prophet (s) and to take it as an honored season, as some of the people are doing, is good and in it there is a great reward, because of their good intentions in honoring the Prophet (s).”

Some of them even reproduce the following from Imam Ibn Taymiyyah,

“And similarly what some people innovate by analogy with the Christians who celebrate the birth of ‘Eesa (Jesus), or out of love for the Prophet (saw) and to exalt him, and may Allaah reward them for this love and effort, not on the fact that it is an innovation... ” (Majmu’a al-Fatawa, Vol.23 p.163, Iqtida’ al-Sirat al-Mustaqim, p.294-295, Section entitled, ‘The innovated festivals of time and place.’)

However, this is a false interpretation and representation of his words which is not surprising to say the least, as one would only be surprised if they were accurate and precise for once in quoting Ahl al-Sunnah. Imam Ibn Taymiyyah said in his monumental book, *Iqtidaa’ al-Sirat al-Mustaqim li Mukhalafat Ashab al-Jahim* ‘Following the Straight Path in Opposing the People of the Hell-Fire’

اقتضاء الصراط المستقيم

لمخالفة أصحاب الجحيم

تأليف شيخ الإسلام

أحمد بن عبد الحليم بن محمد بن حنبل بن تيمية

توفي سنة ٧٢٨ هـ

لحديثه وتعليقه

د. ناصر بن عبد الكريم السبيل

المجلد الأول

مكتبة التراث
الطبعة الأولى

مكتبة التراث
الطبعة الأولى

اَقْنِضَاءُ الصَّرَاطِ الْمُسْتَقِيمِ

لِمُخَالَفَةِ أَصْحَابِ الْجَحِيمِ

تَأَلَّفَ شَيْخُ الْإِسْلَامِ

أَحْمَدُ بْنُ عَبْدِ الْحَلِيمِ بْنِ عَبْدِ السَّلَامِ بْنِ تَيْمِيَّةٍ

الْمُتَوَفَّى سَنَةَ ٧٢٨ هـ

تَحْقِيقٌ وَتَعْلِيقٌ

د. نَاصِرُ بْنُ عَبْدِ الْكَرِيمِ الْعَقْلِي

المجلد الثاني

اتخذ ذلك اليوم عيداً ، حتى يحدث فيه أعمالاً . إذ الأعياد شريعة من الشرائع ، فيجب فيها الاتباع ، لا الابتداع . وللنبي صلى الله عليه وسلم خطب وعهود ووقائع في أيام متعددة : مثل يوم بدر ، وحنين ، والخندق ، وفتح مكة ، ووقت هجرته ، ودخوله المدينة ، وخطب له متعددة يذكر فيها قواعد الدين . ثم لم يوجب ذلك أن يتخذ أمثال تلك الأيام أعياداً . وإنما يفعل مثل هذا النصارى الذين يتخذون أمثال أيام حوادث عيسى عليه السلام أعياداً ، أو اليهود ، وإنما العيد شريعة ، فما شرعه الله اتبع . وإلا لم يحدث في الدين ما ليس منه .

وكذلك ما يحدثه بعض الناس ، إما مضاهاة للنصارى في ميلاد عيسى عليه السلام ، وإما محبة للنبي صلى الله عليه وسلم ، وتعظيماً . والله قد يشبههم^(١) على هذه المحبة والاجتهاد ، لا على البدع - من اتخاذ مولد النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم عيداً . مع اختلاف الناس في مولده . فإن هذا لم يفعله السلف ، مع قيام المقتضي له وعدم المانع منه لو كان خيراً . ولو كان هذا خيراً^(٢) محضاً ، أو راجحاً لكان السلف رضي الله عنهم أحق به منا ، فإنهم كانوا أشد محبة لرسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم وتعظيمهم له منا ، وهم على الخير أحرص . وإنما كمال محبته وتعظيمه في متابعتة وطاعته واتباع أمره ، وإحياء سنته باطنياً وظاهراً ، ونشر ما بعث به ، والجهاد على ذلك بالقلب واليد واللسان . فإن هذه^(٣) طريقة السابقين الأولين ، من المهاجرين والأنصار ، والذين اتبعوهم بإحسان . وأكثر هؤلاء الذين تجدهم حراساً^(٤) على أمثال هذه البدع ، مع ما لهم من حسن القصد ، والاجتهاد الذي^(٥) يرجى لهم بهما المثوبة ، تجدهم فاترين في^(٦) أمر الرسول ، عما أمروا بالنشاط فيه ، وإنما هم بمنزلة من يحلّي المصحف ولا يقرأ فيه ،

(١) في ب : يشبههم .

(٢) في المطبوعة اختلاف في العبارة . راجع ص ٢٩٥ سطر ٢ . من المطبوعة .

(٣) في ب : هذا .

(٤) في المطبوعة : حرساء .

(٥) في ط : الذين .

(٦) في ب : عن . وط : من .

أو يقرأ فيه ولا يتبعه ويمتدح من يزخرف المسجد ، ولا يصلي فيه ، أو يصلي فيه قليلاً ، ويمتدح من يتخذ المساييح^(١) والسجادات المزخرفة . وأمثال هذه الزخارف الظاهرة التي لم تشرع ، وبصحبها من الرياء والكبر ، والاشتغال عن المشروع ما يفسد حال صاحبها ، كما جاء في الحديث : « ما ساء عمل أمة قط إلا زخرفوا مساجدهم »^(٢) .

واعلم أن من الأعمال ما يكون فيه خير ، لاشتغاله على أنواع من المشروع ، وفيه أيضاً شر ، من بدعة وغيرها ، فيكون ذلك العمل خيراً^(٣) بالنسبة إلى [ما^(٤)] اشتمل عليه من أنواع المشروع وشرأ بالنسبة إلى ما اشتمل عليه من [الإعراض عن الدين بالكلية كحال المنافقين والفاسقين^(٥)] . وهذا قد ابتلى به أكثر^(٦) الأمة في الأزمان المتأخرة ، فعليك هنا بأدبين :

أحدهما : أن يكون حرصك على التمسك بالسنة باطنياً وظاهراً ، في خاصتك وخاصة من يطيعك . وأعرف المعروف وأنكر المنكر .

الثاني : أن تدعو الناس إلى السنة بحسب الإمكان فإذا رأيت من يعمل هذا ولا يتركه إلا إلى شر منه ، فلا تدعو إلى ترك منكر بفعل ما هو أنكرك منه ، أو بترك

(١) المساييح جمع مسيحة ، وسبحة . وهي خرزات يُسَّح بها . انظر مختار الصحاح (س ب ح) ص ٢٨٢ ، ويزعّم الذين يستخدمون المساييح أنها تعينهم على ضبط عد التسييح والذكر ، لكن المتصوفة يضيفون عليها شيئاً من القداسة والتبرك والاعتقادات الباطلة ويكاد بعضهم لا يذكر الله ويسبحه دون اصطحابها مع أنها مبتدعة لا أصل لها في دين الله ، لا سيما إذا اعتقد فيها فضيلة .

(٢) الحديث أخرجه ابن ماجه - في كتاب المساجد - باب تشييد المساجد - الحديث رقم ٧٤١ ج ١ ص ٢٤٤ ، ٢٤٥ وقال السيوطي في الجامع الصغير ج ٢ ص ٤٩٧ : « حديث حسن » الحديث رقم ٧٩١٨ .

(٣) في المطبوعة : شراً . وهو قلب للمعنى المراد .

(٤) ما بين القوسين أثبتته من ب فقط وسقط من بقية النسخ والمطبوعة .

(٥) في أ : والقاسدين .

(٦) في أ : كثير .

*“And like that, what some people have innovated, be it out of analogy to the Christians in the birth of ‘Eesa or be it out of love for the Prophet (Sallallahu Alayhi Wasallam) and honor for him and Allah, they may be rewarded for this love and ijtihaad, **not for the innovation as an ‘Eid.** Along with the difference between the people with regards to his birth, this (celebration) was not done by the early generations of pious scholars even though factors that would have necessitating [the Mawlid] were present and there was a lack of any factors that would prevent them from doing so if it had indeed been good.*

If this [the Mawlid] was genuinely good or the correct opinion then the pious scholars of the early generations (may Allaah be pleased with them) would have been more entitled to it than us. They had greater love for the Prophet (Sallallahu Alayhi Wasallam) and were more honouring of him than us; they were more eager upon goodness.

Indeed, from the perfection of loving and honouring him is in following him, being obedient to him, following his command, reviving his Sunnah both in secrecy and open, spreading that which he was sent with, striving regarding that with one’s heart, hand and tongue. For indeed this is the path of the first of the early generations [who accepted his message] from the Muhaajiroon and the Ansaar, and those that followed them in goodness.

Most of them who you find eager upon such innovations (Bid'ah) despite their good intention and striving – for these two things reward is hoped (i.e. their good intention and striving) – however you find them weak in following the command of the Messenger (Sallallahu Alayhi Wasallam) in that which they were commanded to be energetic and enthusiastic. They are like a person who adorns the Mushaf (a copy of the Qur'an) yet does not read what is in it; or they are like somebody who reads [what is in the Qur'an] but never follows it; or somebody who adorns the Masjid yet does not pray in it or only prays a little in it; or like a person who takes extravagant prayer beads and mats. Such apparent adornments which have not been legislated and are accompanied with showing off, pride and being pre-occupied away from what is actually legislated – this all corrupts the state of the person who is like this.

Know that from the actions are those that have some good in them, due to including types of legislated actions and also they include evil such as innovations and other than that. So this action would be good due to what it includes of good and [at the same time] evil due to what it contains of turning away from the religion in its entirety – such is the state of the hypocrites and disobedient people. This is what most of the Ummah has been afflicted by in the later times... ”

Iqtidaa' al-Sirat al-Mustaqim li Mukhalafat Ashab al-Jahim (2:619-620) with the checking of Shaykh Nasir al-Aql, Maktabah al-Rushd 1417/1996,5th edn)

Various translations of the above have been reproduced by a number of brothers with their annotations and essentially it all leads to an undisputed point; that the mawlid is a clear innovation and Imam Ibn Taymiyyah declared it to be an unequivocal innovation. He clearly says as the scans show that the individual may be rewarded for his love and ijtihad.

There is a stark difference between what Imam Ibn Taymiyyah actually said and how the Sufi's and Barelwis have presented this point. Let us also remind the reader the disastrous translations and the deliberate treacherous distortion of the crystal clear words of Imam Ibn Taymiyyah. The Sufi's and Barelwis should at least know venerating and respecting the Messenger of Allah (Sallallahu Alayhi Wasallam); the best of mankind is a fundamental and intricate part of the belief system of Ahl al-Sunnah.

Even the beginning ardent supporter of the Mawlid knows who Shaikh al-Islam Imam Ibn Taymiyyah was and his firm positions on innovations and their destructive affects. They find literally one sentence from his magnitude of works and say he supported the Mawlid!!! Sometimes even shame is ashamed of the antics of these people.

It is known that Imam Ibn Taymiyyah vehemently repelled and subdued innovations and the innovators and his students like Imam al-Bazzar and Imam Ibn Abdul Hadi amongst others all testified to Imam Ibn Taymiyyah's unparalleled efforts in refuting innovations. (*al-Uqud al-Durriyyah Min Manaqib Shaikh ul-Islam Ahmad ibn Taymiyyah* (p.2) *al-A'lam al-Aliyyah Fi Manaqib Ibn Taymiyyah* (p.33), *Kawakaib al-Duriyyah Fi Manaqib al-Mujtahid Ibn Taymiyyah* (p.52)

It is contradictory for Imam Ibn Taymiyyah to say what the opponents allege because he defines innovations very clearly, he said they are things which are not prescribed in the Din of Allah. (*Majmu'a al-Fatawa*(31:36). Therefore how can there be a great reward for doing something that is a bid'ah i.e. not prescribed in the Din of Allah.

He also very clearly mentions the views and positions of the scholars or leaders that occur in different places whether minority or a majority cannot be used whatsoever as evidence to justify innovations. This is also therefore

an answer to the simple beguiled Muslims who sympathize with the Barelwi Sufi's doctrine due to their cultural background and link with what they have been custom to without looking at the intrinsic arguments. (*Iqtida al-Sirat al-Mustaqim li Mukhalafat Ashab al-Jahim* (2:584))

Imam Ibn Taymiyyah further expounds on the understanding of the Mawlid sympathisers and explains that most of the innovations which have been introduced and formulated by leaders and scholars, have been done so by the aforementioned categories of people thinking they are good and something beneficial. The Mawlid is therefore a classical example of something innovated to build and establish acts for community cohesion and for other reasons which range from socio-political reasons and for popular supports etc. (*Majmu'a al-Fatawa* (11:345), *Iqtida al-Sirat al-Mustaqim li Mukhalafat Ashab al-Jahim* (2:594))

We known As Already Said Imam Ibn Taymiyyah classified the Mawlid as an innovation and when he said, “*they may be rewarded for this love and ijtihaad*” (*Iqtida al-Sirat al-Mustaqim li Mukhalafat Ashab al-Jahim* (2:619)) he explains this and says a scholar will be excused if he erred by exercising independent ijtihaad and he may even be rewarded for his efforts but this does not mean the people make taqlid of such a scholar because his

ruling and reasoning may be flawed, incorrect and inaccurate.

When this is the case it cannot be argued that such innovations or practices are something praiseworthy or even carry any reward or a great reward for that matter because Imam Ibn Taymiyyah clearly said and argues himself that if any action is considered to be good there must be divine text in support of the action or practise. If there is a textual evidence for any action say for instance the Mawlid then it will be considered a permissible action according to the shari'ah and not a good innovation i.e. bid'ah hasanah as some of the proponents of the Mawlid claim regarding the mawlid. (*Iqtida al-Sirat al-Mustaqim li Mukhalafat Ashab al-Jahim* (2:584)

They claim and acknowledge the mawlid was never practiced in the first three generations and it is only the extreme ignorant ones who try to prove the mawlid by distorting the texts or using unrelated, non specific and general evidences such as the Barelwi Sufi's spread across the Sufi Tariqahs. Thus, the intellectual prodigies amongst them argue the mawlid is therefore a good bid'ah.

Imam Ibn Taymiyyah also clarified that many scholars or individuals introduced innovations with the sole intention to corrupt and to taint the Shari'ah and when this is his

understanding it would be contradictory for him to say there is a great reward for the one who practices the mawlid. (*al-Nabuwwah* (p.154)

We have already Seen Muhammad Hisham Kabbani, a sufi misguider from America cites half of the words of Imam Ibn Taymiyyah in his *Encyclopaedia of Islamic doctrine* (3:15) wherein he mentions the words of the great reward aspect only whilst having distorted Ibn Taymiyyahs words to show the readers that he approved the mawlid. A number of other sufi writers and mawlid proponents have reproduced these words of Shaykh al-Islam Imam Ibn Taymiyyah in their various treatises.

Other scholars like the former grand Mufti of Saudi Arabia, Shaikh Muhammad Ibn Ibrahim Al-al-Shaikh dismissed such statements allegedly supporting statements of Imam Ibn Taymiyyah for the mawlid, more so its relevance because of the sheer overwhelming number of statements and clear ruling against the mawlid and declaring it to be an innovation from Imam Ibn Taymiyyah himself. (*Rasai'il Fi Hukm al-Ihtifal Bi al-Mawlid al-Nabaw*

Isma'il al-Ansari also answered such false aspersions on the position of Imam Ibn Taymiyyah and he also criticised the sufi, Muhammad Alawi Maliki who had

cited the same words of Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah whilst distorting them. Shaikh Ismail al-Ansari answers such points in his specific and detailed treatise on this issue titled, *al-Qawl al-Fasl Fi Hukm al-Tawassul Bi Khayr al-Rusul*. (See *Rasai'il Fi Hukm al-Ihtifal Bi al-Mawlid al-Nabawi* (2:391-884)

The Egyptian Salafi scholar Shaikh Muhammad Hamid Fiqi answers this point and says how can such people receive reward when they oppose the teachings of the Quran and Sunnah and the way of the companions. He goes onto say if they argue they reached this conclusion through their independent reasoning i.e. ijtiḥad but they made a mistake then what kind of ijtiḥad is this in that it opposes the conclusive and established texts of ibadah and thus it falls outside the remit of ijtiḥad. (See his notes to the *Iqtida al-Sirat al-Mustaqim li Mukhalafat Ashab al-Jahim* (p.294-296), see also *Rasai'il Fi Hukm al-Ihtifal Bi al-Mawlid al-Nabawi* (1:220-223)

Imam Ibn Taymiyyah very clearly himself ruled the mawlid to be a reprehensible i.e. makruh innovation because the Salaf us-Saleh did not celebrate it. (*Majmu'a al-Fatawa* (1:36)

Shaykh al-Islam Imam Ibn Taymiyyah was asked can a person recite the whole of the Quran in honour of the Prophets birthday? Instead of giving a straight yes or no

answer, he expands on the discussion and deals with all of the innovated festivals or Eids. he said.

“The gathering of the people for food during the two eids is a normal sunnah as they are the rites of Islam which the Messenger of Allah (Sallallahu Alayhi Wasallam) set for the muslims and by caring for the poor by feeding them during Ramadan is a sunnah of Islam. The Messenger of Allah (Sallallahu Alayhi Wasallam) said whoever feeds the fasting person will receive a similar reward to him.” Also helping the poor reciters of the Quran is a virtuous act at any time and therefore whoever supports them shares the reward. And as for the establishment of a seasonal festival (mawsim) that is not among the lawful i.e. shari’ah festivals such as one of the nights of Rabi al-Awwal, which is said to be the night of the mawlid or one of the nights of Rajab or the 18th of Dhul Hijjah or the first friday prayer of Rajab or the eighth of Shawwal which the ignorant call the festival of the righteous ones i.e. Eid al-Abrar, **THESE ARE AMONG THE INNOVATIONS – BID’AH THAT THE SALAF US-SALEH DID NOT RECOMMEND NOR DID THEY PRACTISE** and Allah the mighty and exalted knows best.” (*Majmu’a al-Fatawa* (1:312))

The avid reader is referred to the monumental book which has been oft quoted in these papers, namely *Iqtida al-Sirat al-Mustaqim li Mukhalafat Ashab al-Jahim* wherein

Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah deals with the innovated festivals and Eids in great detail and lays the foundations and principles of Ahl al-Sunnah wal Jama'ah. A lot of content can be added to the understanding of the mawlid from the words of Imam Ibn Taymiyyah which would be beyond the simplicity of these papers.

However, before we conclude the series on Imam Ibn Taymiyyah on the mawlid and how the Sufiyyah have miserably failed to show Ibn Taymiyyah approved the mawlid, let us show the Sufi Barelwi and the global Sufiyyah that they are very quick to quote Ibn Taymiyyah to us, so we ask what they make of Muhammad Alawi Maliki arguing that special gatherings of the Prophets Birthday are lawful because it is understood to be a custom and not worship and not ibadah. Muhammad Alawi Maliki furthers his argument and says if the mawlid was considered a special day of worship it would be an unlawful i.e. haram bid'ah (see his *Hawl al-Ihtifal Bil Mawlid al-Nabawi al-Sharif* (p.12) and *Mafahim Yajib An Tusahhaha* (p.224-226)

The first point is a very poor deduction and a clever ploy to dodge the ruling of innovation and an attempt to hide under the cloak of adat i.e. custom. This is a false notion because an adat or custom is something that has always been practised by the Muslims and or the custom of a group of muslims from different lands and this is limited in number because if all of the Muslims began to do this,

it no longer remains a custom. Secondly customs are only accepted if they do not oppose the texts of Islam as any custom which opposes the clear guidance from the Quran and Sunnah is rejected.

One only needs to ask the participants of the mawlid gatherings to see how much Islam they have within them and how the pristine shari'ah is violated. To say the mawlid is a muslim custom is the most powerful stretch of the imagination because there is no reward in a custom so then why do it and if it is a custom as wishfully claimed, then why is it called an Eid, surely this is highly contradictory and a case of polemics???

As for Muhammad Alawi Maliki's second point, then we find the mawlid sympathisers do consider the mawlid to be a special day, wherein special gatherings are organised, food is made, lights adorn the houses and special events and processions are organised around the globe. This clearly shows they do consider the mawlid to be a special day of worship and they do single out special day i.e. the 12th of Rabi al-Awwal. Therefore according to their own scholar, Muhammad Alawi Maliki the Sufi Barelwis are committing an unlawful innovation i.e. a haram bid'ah.

Source:

